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# SOME NEW THOUGHTS

FOR THE

# *NEW YEAR.*

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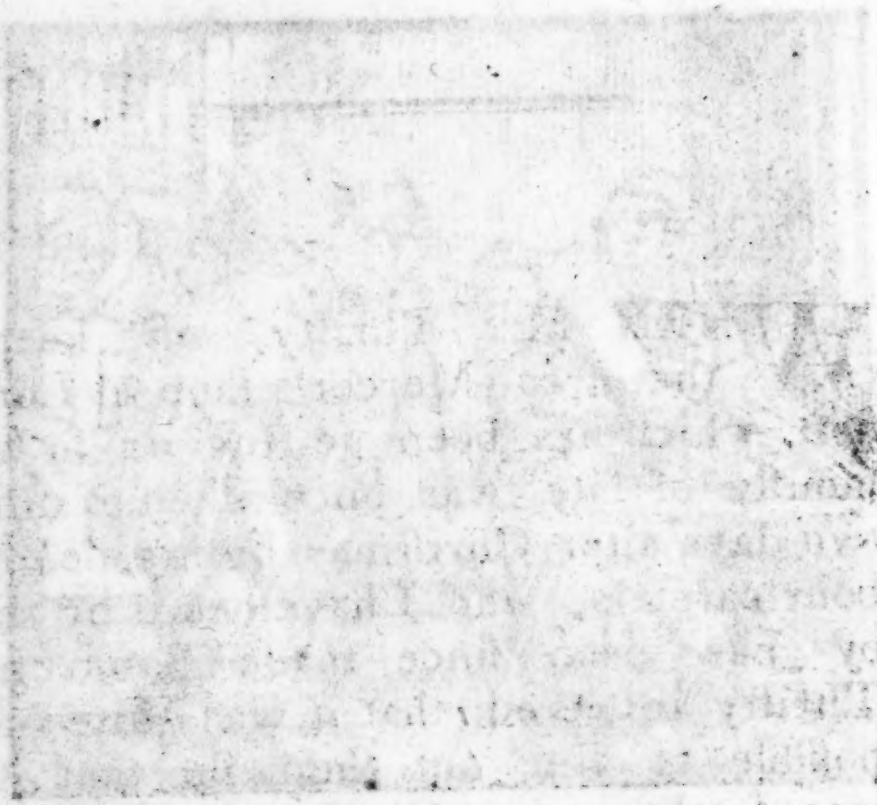

## Some New Thoughts, &c.

WHEN Mr. Thrifty, who keeps that great Mercer's ſhop in London, which has been getting on ſo famouſly of late, was once aſked to dine two days after Chriſtmas by his neighbour careleſs, who I have heard by the by has been ſince made Bankrupt, Thrifty anſwered, that it was quite impoſſible to dine out then, for that he was ſettling his Chriſtmas accounts, "which," added he, "muſt not be neglected for the world, for I ſhould never know where I was; I ſhould not underſtand whether I was going forward or

backward, getting rich or growing ever ſo poor, if I was to neglect caſting up, and balancing, and examining into every thing at Chriſtmas."—" Why to be ſure," anſwered Careleſs, " you have a large buſineſs Mr. Thrifty, and a large buſineſs muſt be looked after."—" 'Tis by my looking after it that it has become ſo large," returned Thrifty with a look of great ſhrewdneſs, " and if I were not to look after it ſtill, it would ſoon grow little again I warrant you."

I am perſuaded that my Readers and I ſhall one and all of us allow, that this was a very right obſervation of Mr. Thrifty's, and yet I doubt whether we ſhall equally agree in the following remark, though it has nearly the ſame foundation; namely, that if we hope to be ſaved from ruin in the next world, and to ſucceed in our everlaſting intereſts, it is neceſſary that we ſhould uſe the very ſame kind of diligence in examining the ſtate of our ſouls, which Mr. Thrifty uſed in examining the ſtate of his worldly buſineſs.

There is alſo a manner of deceiving ourſelves in our religious concerns, which is very like that in which they who fail in buſineſs are apt to be deceived. No man means entirely and at all times to neglect his ſoul; no, he merely puts off his ſelf-examination, or he is idle and ſlovenly about it. Mr. Careleſs uſed always to be of opinion, that a regular yearly balancing of his books was not neceſſary. He thought he could form a pretty fair general gueſs at the ſtate of his affairs, without taking all the trouble that Mr. Thrifty took in going particularly into them. It proved, however, when Mr. Careleſs broke, that the few goods he had to ſhew had been moſt ſtrangely over-valued, and on the other hand, that the debts he owed amounted to about five times the ſum he expected. Now I am perſuaded, that thoſe of my Readers who never examine their hearts, will, on the day of judgment, find themſelves as much miſtaken in reſpect to the worth of their ſuppoſed virtues as well as the number of their ſins, which are like ſo many debts due to God, as ever

Mr. Careleſs was, and the only way of recovering from their danger, will be to do immediately what the friends of Mr. Careleſs adviſed him to do the Chriſtmas before he broke—I mean to look their affairs fully in the face, to take inſtant meaſures for getting at a true and juſt eſtimate of them, and then to adopt ſome wiſe and prudent plan for their effectual relief.

I will add one other obſervation. This Mr. Careleſs, as I have heard, did not break through any violent miſconduct: he never was guilty of any ſcandalous and immediately ruinous tranſaction like ſome others, but then he was inattentive to his buſineſs, and by this mere inattention he was year after year dropping down, without being aware of it, into ſure and certain ruin: he never could be perſuaded to look carefully into his affairs, which was owing at firſt to idleneſs, and latterly to this additional cauſe, that a certain kind of fearfulneſs and falſe ſhame had got about him, inſomuch, that when ſome friends of his who perceived his igno-

rance of book-keeping, offered on the Chriſtmas before he broke to lend him ſome aſſiſtance, he abſolutely declined it, which was conſidered always as one of the moſt unpardonable parts of his whole conduct.

I propoſe now, after the example of theſe friends of Mr. Careleſs, to hold out to my readers ſome aſſiſtance in entering into that ſelf-examination which I am here preſſing upon them, and if they think proper to neglect the help that is offered them, I can only ſay, that I think they really ſo much reſemble Mr. Careleſs, that they ought to come forward and take his part, and to defend his character from thoſe ſevere cenſures which I am told that his neglect of a like offer has every where brought upon him.

But let me firſt add a few more words to prove that the kind of compariſon which I have ſpoken of is really a juſt one; for many people ſeem by no means to be convinced, that a man may be ruined in his ſoul by mere neglect,

in the ſame manner as he may in his trading buſineſs. I will venture to obſerve on this head, that neglect is apt to bring on ruin not in a mercers ſhop only, but even in every thing. Name me now, if you can one trade or profeſſion in life which can thrive without diligence? Has not God ſo made the world as to ſhew that man muſt be diligent, and that it is at his peril to be neglectful? There is no buſineſs that will do itſelf; moreover, if a man be ever ſo diligent in one thing, but quite neglectful of another, he is ſure to feel the conſequence even of this partial careleſſneſs. If a farmer was to look well to his laborers in the field, but not to mind his marketting, or if trader Thrifty was to be always bringing up his books in the counting-houſe but never to go forward in the ſhop and wait upon his cuſtomers, do you think he would not ſuffer by it? So if a man minds this world only, and never thinks of the next, the buſineſs of the next world will certainly not be done, as he will find hereafter to his coſt. Some men, if any one ſhould inquire into the ſtate of their ſouls, and ſhould aſk

for a reaſon of the hope that is in hem," would merely anſwer in gene- l that God is merciful, and that Chriſt ied for them, and add the like gene- l reaſons, which any man in Chriſtien- om may give as well as they, and if ou were to preſs them further they ould only ſay, I know not much about e matter, I hope well, I truſt God ith my ſoul: I ſhall fare as well as ther men do: I thank God I never ade any doubt of my Salvation." ow what do all ſuch kind of ſayings iſcover, but a wilful neglect of their alvation. It is as if a ſhip-maſter ould let his veſſel alone and ſay, "I ill venture it among the rocks, and aves, and winds: I will truſt God ith it: It will fare as well as other veſ- els." I ſay what horrible abuſe of God's hercy is this! he commands us to give iligence to make our calling and electi- n ſure, and in this way of diligence truſt him.

It may be further added, that in ge- eral we find in all our affairs in this fe, that whatever is moſt important re-

quires the higheſt degree of care and diligence: ought we not therefore to fear leſt negligence ſhould prove the moſt fatal of all in the concerns of the immortal ſoul, which are certainly the greateſt of our concerns? What care is neceſſary to keep alive our body: it muſt be daily fed, and clothed, and cheriſhed, and provided for in a vaſt variety of ways; and it is not neceſſary to lay violent hands upon it in order to deſtroy it. If due care be not taken of it, it periſhes of courſe. So is it with a man's ſoul, it is certainly periſhing if it's intereſts are neglected and forgotten by him, and it may be as effectually deſtroyed without any great ſin, as the body may without any great blow.

Once more I beg leave to add, that it is no proof our ſouls are ſafe that we feel at preſent no harm or inconvenience from our neglect of them. Mr Careleſs felt no inconvenience from his neglect at the time when he aſked Thrifty to dinner. His bankruptcy came upon him quite like a thunder-clap: his things indeed were in confuſion be-

fore, but the ſame idleneſs which kept him from examining them, kept him from knowing before-hand the miſery that awaited him. I apprehend, therefore, that the cheerfulneſs of which ſome thoughtleſs and irreligious people, make their boaſt is no proof of their ſafety, but is merely like the gaiety of Mr. Careleſs on the day when he was making merry with his company, inſtead of caſting up his books, and minding the main chance, as it is called.

But I muſt obſerve further, that there is one great error which a vaſt number of people fall into, and by which they are apt to be made very eaſy under the moſt complete neglect of their ſouls. The miſtake I mean is the following one: they are diligent as they call it, at their duty: thus, for inſtance, they dig hard, if digging is their buſineſs, they write and caſt accounts and keep ſhop diligently if they are clerks or ſhop-keepers, or they do their exerciſe briſkly and follow orders readily if they are ſoldiers or ſailors, and having done this their daily work they think they have

done all that can be required of them. Religion they poſſibly allow to be a good thing, but this, ſay they, is Religion: nay, to do their work well is the beſt ſort of Religion, and they deſire to know no other. Let us now combat this error which has a very fair appearance, and which has alſo ſome mixture of truth with it.

Preſuming, my Readers, to believe the bible, I will here, in the firſt place quote Scripture on the ſubject. If to labor merely in our calling is one and the ſame thing as to labor for our ſouls, how comes our Savior to have uſed for inſtance ſuch expreſſions as the following? "*Labor not for the meat that perisheth but for the meat which endureth to everlasting life.*" I grant our Savior does not hereby mean that we ought not in any ſenſe to labor for the "meat that periſheth," but he certainly muſt mean that we ought not to labor for this only, nor even for this chiefly; he muſt alſo mean that there is a duty called by him "labouring for everlaſting life," which is a diſtinct thing from labouring to ſup-

port our bodies; for if theſe two things were not diſtinct, he would not have mentioned them ſo diſtinctly. Again our Savior ſpeaks of a man who had been "filling his garners and laying up goods for many years," who evidently therefore was a very diligent man in his buſineſs, and yet this is the very man who is pointed out as one whoſe ſoul had been neglected; for it is ſaid, "*Thou fool, this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee.*" I will add another remarkable ſaying of our Savior on the ſame ſubject. He deſcribes the general invitation to attend to the Goſpel by comparing it to "a Marriage ſupper," to which, ſaid he, when men were aſked to come, "*they all with one conſent began to make excuſe, for one went to his farm, another to his merchandize. One ſaid I have bought a yoke of oxen and I muſt needs go and prove them, and another ſaid I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.*" Nothing can prove more plainly than this parable the point we are now urging; for it ſhews that attention to our worldly buſineſs, ſo far from being the ſame thing

as attention to Religion, is often the main hindrance to it. I am going to my farm, ſaid the men in Chriſt's time, and therefore I cannot attend to the Goſpel. I am going to my farm, ſay theſe men now, but they have the face even to pretend that this is the ſame thing as attending to the Goſpel, than which nothing can be more contrary to our Savior's declaration. Our Savior, ends his parable by aſſuring all the people who put him off by any ſuch excuſes, that "*none of thoſe men that were bidden ſhall taſte of his ſupper;*" which is as if he had ſaid, "You who give no attention to the Goſpel ſhall have no ſhare in the benefits of it. You have been invited indeed, but ſince you do not come you ſhall never taſte of its ſalvation."

And indeed it ſeems quite agreeable to reaſon to ſuppoſe, that God, who has made man to conſiſt both of body and mind, is not likely to be ſatisfied with his mere bodily labour, but that he muſt require the affections of the mind to be given to Him alſo. If mere diligence

in our calling is all in all, I ſee not why a man may not be allowed even to deny the being of God: for an Atheiſt may very poſſibly be led to mind his buſineſs tolerably well from mere worldly motives, and juſt in like manner ſome perſons who call themſelves Chriſtians, may be induced to go on regularly with their work, all the while forgetting God as much as if they were downright Atheiſts.

Having thus proved, as I truſt, the neceſſity of attending to the intereſts of the ſoul, and having alſo ſhewn that it is not ſufficient to carry on our worldly buſineſs merely on worldly principles, I ſhall proceed to the main point which is before us, namely, to offer the Reader ſome help towards a ſerious examination of his conduct during the laſt year, and I truſt that what will be further ſaid will throw much additional light on the general ſubject.

Firſt then I deſire the Reader ſeriouſly to aſk himſelf, "what has been the ordinary ground and motive of his acti-

ons during the laſt year." You profeſs, I doubt not, to believe in God, and you expect hereafter to be judged by Him, but have you in the laſt year made it the leading motive of all your actions to endeavour to pleaſe him? It is in vain to think that you have pleaſed Him if you have not intended to pleaſe Him. How is it that we judge in caſes that ariſe between a man and his fellow creatures? I believe a wife, for inſtance, would not much thank her huſband for doing her a kindneſs, if ſhe thought he never intended her a kindneſs, and had her not at all in his thought when he did it. Her huſbands affection is the thing ſhe chiefly wants, and the kind action is only ſo far pleaſing to her, as it is a ſymptom of this affection in the mind. Now all this is extremely reaſonable; there is ſome nicety I grant in the diſtinction, but it is a nicety we all very well underſtand in our own caſe, and we have no right therefore to ſay that we cannot underſtand it when God is concerned. "*My ſon*," ſaith God to us in the ſcripture, "*give me thine heart.*" And again, "*Thou ſhalt love*

*the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy strength, this is the first and great commandment.*" Diſregarding this claim, we toil, we dig, we labor for our daily bread without almoſt thinking of God in it, and at the year's end we expect him to accept this bodily ſervice, though performed with a mere view to our own worldly benefit, inſtead of the affections he has required of us.

Now as this is a very great and awful ſubject, and as it was one on which, every thing elſe that we ſhall add will be made to reſt, let us endeavour to lead the Reader to dwell very ſeriouſly upon it. God is that Being in whoſe character is to be found every poſſible perfection: He is moſt great, and glorious, and holy, and excellent, and bountiful and benevolent; and he is alſo full of compaſſion and tender mercy. Has any fellow-creature a claim to our regard? God has a ſtill clearer and more undoubted claim; and if we refuſe to pay regard to God, we may on much the ſame ground refuſe to honor our fa-

ther, to love our neareſt relations, and to render thanks to all our earthly benefactors. They that never think of God may on a like principle excuſe themſelves from ever thinking of them alſo; for is He not our Benefactor? Is He not our Father? Is it not he that ſends us thoſe very friends which are ſuch comforts to us, and who beſtow upon us all our bleſſings? Endeavour now to count all His mercies to you during the paſt year. Number firſt all the bleſſings that have come to you by themeans of friends, and all your various family comforts, theſe all have proceeded originally from God. Think next of the ſucceſs you may have had in your calling: It is not your own hand that has gotten you the guineas which perhaps you have been lately numbering. It is the Lord. Think next of the health you have had, and the degree of freedom from bodily pain. It is God alſo that defends us "from the noiſome peſtilence, from the arrow that flieth by night, and from the peſtilence t t walketh at noon-day." Again, think of the dangers of other kinds which you may in the laſt year

have eſcaped, whether from ſecret enemies or open violence: The dangers to your perſon, to your property, and to your reputation. Why is it that you are alive and well, and in ſo much ſecurity at the year's end. It is becauſe the Lord hath been with you by night and by day, to watch over you, and guard and protect you, and keep you from evil. To theſe mercies, if you add your own more particular and ſpecial mercies, and if you add moreover all the infinite bleſſings of the Goſpel, ſuch as the promiſe of the forgiveneſs of ſin, through Jeſus Chriſt, and the hope of everlaſting life, ſurely you muſt own that the Lord's goodneſs is vaſt and unſpeakable, and that his mercies are over all his works, and that they are more in number than the hairs of your head, and as the ſands on the ſea-ſhore innumerable. Do you not now therefore begin to ſee the nature of your obligation to him, and the reaſonableneſs of endeavouring to pleaſe a Being who is thus great and good alſo? What becomes then of that obſervation, ſo plauſible to an irreligious mind, name-

ly, that if we have but done our work regularly we have fulfilled our duty, even though God has not been thought of in it? Surely it is an obſervation full of baſeneſs and ingratitude. I believe no man who loves his family and friends forbears to think of them now and then while his hand is at it's labour, and why are not our thoughts to aſcend in like manner to God, as the great father of mercies, while the day's buſineſs is going forward, and why may not the deſire to pleaſe him well in all things form the very motive and ſpur to all our induſtry? Has this then been the ground and motive of your diligence during the laſt year? This is the firſt queſtion that is propoſed to you.

When this duty of regarding God in all things is well ſettled and underſtood (a duty which by-the-by is of all duties the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt) then it becomes eaſy to prove a number of further points, which are apt otherwiſe to be neglected; as for inſtance, *the obligation to worship God in public and in ſecret.* If we feel that regard to God

which has been ſpoken of we ſhall be naturally, as it were, diſpoſed to pray to him. If we feel the obligations that have been mentioned, we ſhall be ready to kneel down and thank him, and if we are ſenſible that it is He who not only ſupplies our wants but alſo forgives us our ſins, and likewiſe that it is by Him alone, as the Scriptures tells us, that we are enabled to think a good thought, and to fulfil any one duty aright, it follows then that we ſhall be continually enlarging our petitions to Him, and that we ſhall call upon Him daily for all theſe important and indiſpenſible bleſſings. Have you then been thus leading a life of dependence on God, and truly devout prayer to him, both in the public congregation, in your family, and in ſecret during the laſt year?

When this duty to God is well underſtood, then the ſin of *neglecting the Sabbath* begins to ſeem very plain alſo. This is that day which has been mercifully ſet apart for religious uſes, it therefore is the day for more particular and

earneſt prayer in private and in public, and alſo for more regular ſelf-examination than can always take place on other days, and it may be remarked, that as on every Sunday we ought to call ourſelves to account for our behaviour during the week, ſo at the year's end it may be proper to take ourſelves to taſk for all our conduct on the Sabbaths; for if they have been neglected it is more than probable that our whole duty has been neglected by us.

We will next ſpeak of *reading the Scriptures.* The diſuſe of this practice ariſes from the ſame cauſe which we have before referred to, namely, the want of a due regard to God. Many of thoſe who are moſt negligent in this point, nevertheleſs acknowledge the Bible to be the word of God. It is plain therefore that the negligence of theſe perſons muſt ariſe from their feeling no deſire to know what is the will of their Heavenly Father; for if they felt a deſire to knuw his will, they certainly would take all means of diſcovering it. If a ſervant had got a letter directed to

him which he believed to be from his maſter, and was zealous to do his maſters will, do you think he would not be eager to open and read the letter? And if we are earneſt in like manner to know and do the will of God, ſhall we not be eager to open and read the Scriptures? I believe it is the excuſe of ſome that the Scriptures are difficult to be underſtood, and that their meaning in many places is doubtful; to which I anſwer, that ſo is the meaning of all books more or leſs to ſome kind of perſons. The objection proves only at the moſt, that you ſhould read for the preſent thoſe parts of them which are more eaſy, and which have the moſt manifeſt tendency to do you good. In fact however it is the want of a deep concern about the ſalvation of our ſouls, (which is the chief ſubject the Bible treats of) that cauſes it to appear ſo difficult, as well as inſipid and unimproving as it does to ſome people.

We have ſpoken hitherto only of religious duties. We will now ſay ſomething of the ordinary duties of life,

and if we deſcribe them truly, it will immediately appear that even theſe are not likely to have been fulfilled in any reſpect as they ought, unleſs there has been a religious principle for the foundation.

Firſt how have you performed the *duties of your own calling* in the laſt year? Here it may perhaps be anſwered by ſome people, "We have no calling, for we are able through the money which we have ſaved, or which our fathers have ſaved for us, to live without work. We have therefore had nothing to do; we are independent perſons." What, then, are you independent on God? It is the buſineſs of Religion to put an end to this fancied right to independence, and to ſubject every thought, word, and action, to the will of a ſuperior, to the will I mean of a ſtrict and holy God. What a bleſſing to ſociety is Religion when conſidered in this view! It turns all thoſe perſons who are otherwiſe the drones of the community, into ſome of the moſt ſerviceable people in it. O, how many troubles and miſe-

ries are there in this land, which if a few more of our independent ladies and gentelmen would be ſo good as to turn Chriſtians, (I mean zealous Chriſtians!) would preſently be relieved. What a great number of poor cottagers are there who drag on life both in wickedneſs and miſery for tho want of being overlooked, and inſtructed, and adviſed, now and then aſſiſted by their ſuperiors who dwell near them? Here perhaps a whole pariſh is neglected through want of a chriſtian pariſh officer; there the accounts of an hoſpital need examining, or a workhouſe is given up to vice and ruin; here a uſeful club wants a Treaſurer or a Patron, or a declining charity ſchool is without an Inſpector, or a new ſchool ought to be ſet up; here again a private quarrel is raging which the interference of a ſuperior, if he ſhould alſo be a Chriſtian, might preſently heal. What innumerable opportunities alſo has an independent perſon of diſtributing religious books, or conveying ſerious advice to thoſe whom Providence has placed under his influence. Now theſe are the employments

which conſtitute the calling of independent people. Chriſtianity brings them to a ſtrict ſenſe of their reſponſibility in theſe and many other like points, and at the ſame time enlarges their hearts in love to all their fellow creatures.

Well then, have you followed this your Chriſtian calling, and followed it diligently during the laſt year? Oh! no, you are one of thoſe perhaps who have ſpent the whole year in ſome trifling employment, merely to gratify your own taſte, or to pleaſe your own vanity. Theſe are the things which have formed your chief calling, and while the vices of the poor have been dreadfully increaſing in your pariſh, and the groans of the miſerable have been almoſt reaching your door, you have been ſpending your little independent income on yourſelf, and fancying that all was well.

But let us next addreſs the more labouring part of the community, and if they will allow us to examine them cloſely, I believe it will equally appear, that a chriſtian principle is neceſſary in

their caſe, in order to carry them through their buſineſs with real faithfulneſs and integrity. Firſt, have none of you been on the whole very idle during the laſt year? Are there none who have ſlackened in their work becauſe they thought the Pariſh muſt relieve them whenever their idleneſs ſhould have brought them to want? Are there none who have choſen rather to burthen ſome charitable friend than to buckle heartily to their work? And has every one of you been as diligent juſt after he had got a week's wages in hand as before? Now Chriſtianity will have led you to work at all times, not on Saturday only, but on Monday alſo, making conſcience of habitual diligence; nay, you will have been ready (as the apoſtle exhorts) "to work with your hand in the thing that is good, that you may have to give to him that needeth." And how have you employed both your time and thoughts when the regular hours of work have been over? Which of you," ſays Chriſt, "having a ſervant ploughing or feeding cattle will ſay unto him by-and-by, when he is come from the field, Go and ſit

thou down to meat, and will not rather ſay to him, Make ready wherewith *I* may ſup, and gird thyſelf and ſerve *me*." —Thus does our Saviour teach us that we are all rich indeed as well as poor, like ſo many ſervants, who, when we have done ſerving our maſter in the field, muſt then go and ſerve him in the houſe. The Chriſtian laborer therefore is one who has no ſooner done ſerving Chriſt by his ordinary calling abroad, than he proceeds next to ſerve the ſame maſter by his chriſtian conduct at home, by uſeful converſation with his children, by reading a portion of ſcripture to them, and by uniting with them in prayer to the great Father of Mercies for a bleſſing on all the family before they lie down to reſt.

Again aſk yourſelf whether you may not have been more or leſs an *eye-ſervant?* If you are a common gardening man have you not worked harder when the head gardener was in the garden than when he was out of it? and if a clerk or apprentice, have you not made more ſpeed when your employer has

happened to come into the ſhop or counting houſe? If a footman have you been as faithful and diligent, have you riſen as early, worked as ſteadily, gone your errands as nimbly, and turned your hand to any thing wanted of you as readily as if your maſter had stood by watching you? Now if you are a Chriſtian ſervant you will have done every thing under the impreſſion, that One who is far greater than your earthly maſter has been always at hand obſerving you? "Servants," ſays the Apoſtle, "obey your maſters, not with eye ſervice as men pleaſers, but as the ſervants of Chriſt, doing the will of God from the heart."

The idleneſs and eye ſervice which have been ſpoken of, neceſſarily imply alſo ſome injuſtice to your employer: You have agreed with him to give him ſo much work for ſo much pay, but if you have ſecretly waſted in idleneſs, or turned to your own uſe a part of that time which you engaged to give to your maſter, you have then robbed him of his due, you have as much wronged

your maſter, as your maſter would have wronged you if he had ſecretly taken back a part of the wages he had profeſſed to give you, or had knowingly miſcounted the money in his own favour while he was paying you.

Again, there are many kinds of diſhoneſty which are practiſed almoſt without reflection, and with a very quiet conſcience, becauſe cuſtom is ſuppoſed to authorize them; the new year therefore ſeems a very proper time for examining into theſe points. It may in general be ſuſpected that all profits or *privileges*, as they are called, which are carefully concealed, have ſomething diſhoneſt in them, for if they are quite honeſt, why ſhould they not be public? The difficulty of breaking through theſe cuſtoms is often much increaſed by a certain falſe ſhame, which makes people afraid of doing it, leſt they ſhould thereupon be charged with pretending to be better than their neighbours. Religion however tends to cure this falſe ſhame, for when a deep concern about the ſalvation of the ſoul ariſes, a man is carried above

those little feelings which ſo often interfere with his duty, and being obliged to turn over a new leaf in many great points, he takes the opportunity of rectifying a thouſand ſmaller inadvertencies, which many men of the world, though accounted moral, never think of doing, becauſe they have no motive ſtrong enough to put them upon a kind of change.

We ſhall now name a few more ſubjects for ſelf-examination, which we ſhall not do with much particularity; ſince the Reader's own mind may enlarge upon them.

How have you behaved during the laſt year in reſpect to relative duties? It may not be amiſs at this time of the year to recollect the names of our relations and connections one by one, and then to aſk ourſelves who is there of theſe whom I have either hurt by my miſconduct, or neglected, through idleneſs or ſecret diſlike, who is there of them whom I have put off by a little outward complaiſance, when I ought to have been affectionate and kind? Again, who is there of them with whom

I have too much agreed, not daring
ſhew any Chriſtian ſingularity in the
preſence, and conforming both to the
and to the world, through fear of the
ill will? The duty ſubſiſting betwee
near connections, ſuch as huſbands a
wives, or parents and children, oug
to form at this time of year a very gre
ſubject of ſelf examination, and th
which our Chriſtian duty dictates will
found to contribute exceedingly to i
creaſe our private happineſs.

Have you alſo in the laſt year bee
temperate, ſober, and chaſte, as t
Scriptures require? Have you not a
lowed yourſelf to live in any of tho
vices of which the Scripture ſays th
"they which do ſuch things ſhall n
inherit the kingdom of God." Agai
have you been combating with all yo
evil tempers in the laſt year, a
what has been your ſucceſs in the co
flict? Every man has ſome particul
infirmity. Some are apt to be ſtubbo
and ſelf willed, others weak and yiel
ing. Some are bold and forward, othe
too fearful and aſhamed. Some a
ſleepy and inactive, others are too bu

nd prone to meddle even in what does ot concern them. Some are too ſilent nd others as much too talkative. Some ave affections that are continually be- aying them into inconveniences if ot dangers, and ſome have an ungra- ous and diſagreeable harſhneſs with hich they ought to contend. Some ſo have much natural pride, or a rong turn to vanity.—Now if you are ed to ſearch out your faults, you will ave long ſince known in ſome meaſure hich of theſe may be yours, and you ill be glad to be reminded at the year's nd that you ought to inquire how far ou have gained ground on that ſin hich has moſt eaſily beſet you.

We will only mention farther, have ou been obſervant of the hand of Pro- dence in all the events that have me acroſs you in the laſt year? Have u referred your ſickneſs or your alth your loſſes in trade, or your ſuc- ſſes, as well as all the deaths in your mily and among your friends, toge- er with every other incident of the ar, to a Divine Providence, which s ordered all things that have befallen

you. And have you conſidered the a
fronts and injuries of men, the har
ſhips you have ſuffered, the nation
calamities alſo of which you may ha
borne your part, in the ſame religio
light, namely, as the means by whi
God has been pleaſed to try you. An
have you been therefore reſigned an
patient under ſufferings, as well
thankful for your mercies.

And laſtly, while you are now reco
lecting all the Eſcapes and Deliveranc
you have experienced, as well as th
affecting Deaths and Changes which yo
have perhaps witneſſed during the la
twelvemonth in your family, are yo
led thereby to meditate on the unce
tainty of your own future life, and
the coming of that awful day, whe
"we muſt all appear before the jud
ment ſeat of Chriſt to give account
the things done in the body," and whe
both you and "all that are in the
graves ſhall come forth, they that hav
done good to the reſurrection of lif
and they that have done evil to th
ſurrection of damnation."

To this ſubject of ſelf-examinatio

which is now closed, one important re-
mark shall be added. Perhaps some
Reader will have been ready to reply
to some of the strict questions which
have been put to him, " Why at this
rate who can be saved? " If all this be
necessary for salvation I must despair
and give up the point."

We would request every such despon-
ding Reader to turn this Tract to the
following use: Let him avail himself of
it in the first place in order to alarm his
fears, and to do away that false notion of
innocence, which men who never exa-
mine themselves are apt to trust to as
the ground of their salvation, and when
what he has read has thus convinced
him of his exceeding guilt, let it then
send his thoughts to that Savior of the
world " whom God hath set forth to be
a propitiation through faith in his blood,
to declare his righteousness for the re-
mission of sins that are past, through the
forbearance of God." Let him proceed
to think deeply and often on that in-
structive subject of " his being justified
freely by God's grace, through the re-
demption that is in Jesus Christ?" a

ſubject the powerful force of which it turning the whole heart to God, the Reader has perhaps not yet taken into his calculation. Encouraged by the pardon of which this doctrine aſſures him if he is penitent, and accepting moſt heartily and thankfully it's free and undeſerved ſalvation, let him then account himſelf to be "not his own but "bought with a price," and let him live no longer to himſelf, but to him that hath died for him." A heart warmed with gratitude to Chriſt will ſtand in the place of a thouſand arguments; it will make that labor pleaſant which otherwiſe ſeems intolerable: and it will cauſe all thoſe duties, which we ſeemed to deſcribe with ſo much ſtrictneſs, to appear now no more than a juſt and reaſonable ſervice.

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